



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Public Safety Advisory

High Surf- Dangerous Conditions During Spring Break

Large, powerful surf all along California's coast is creating dangerous ocean conditions for beach visitors. California State Parks warns visitors to avoid exposed beach and rock areas near the surf line, as unexpected large wave surges could wash them into the surf.

High surf and strong winds are causing rough conditions that can make swimming, wading, and ocean water recreation dangerous. High winds are forecasted to increase and continue through the weekend.

"Caution is strongly advised. Rip currents are the cause of approximately 80 percent of water rescues along the coast," said Alex Peabody, aquatic specialist within the California State Parks Public Safety Division. "Watch from a distance, not up close!"

With Spring Break in full swing, lifeguards and park rangers have been busy warning visitors at state beaches from Sonoma County to San Diego County. It is especially dangerous for people unfamiliar with the ocean environment's strong rip currents and large waves.

Avoid exposed beach and rock areas close to the surf line. These areas can seem safe from most breaking waves, but the pattern of breaking waves can produce a periodic sequence of large, very strong surges that can wash over rocks and beaches great distances and take visitors by surprise. Peabody also asks visitors to keep in mind that ocean temperatures are still cold and most beaches are still torn up from winter storms.

Northern California and the Central Coast are experiencing wave sets running up to 10 feet at some west facing beaches and reefs due to a large northerly swell. South facing breaks in Southern California have reported large surf as well, that has arrived from storms thousands of miles away in the southern hemisphere. This north-south swell combination has increased the risk of strong rip currents, especially during the outgoing tides.

The National Weather Service has issued a high surf advisory and rip current warning as well.

Please check your local state park office and NOAA Weather for the updated information and local conditions," said Peabody.

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“Be preventative, and be safe out there,” he said.

The following information is provided courtesy of the United States Lifesaving Association, in partnership with NOAA's National Weather Service:

How to Avoid and Survive Rip Currents

- Learn how to swim!
- Never swim alone.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches.
If in doubt, don't go out!
- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.
- If caught in a rip current, remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Don't fight the current. Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline.
When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water.
When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, wave your arms, and yell for help.
- If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 9-1-1. Throw the rip current victim something that floats and yell instructions on how to escape. Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.

Learn more about rip currents online at www.usla.org/ripcurrents